THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) to (c). In Haryana Telecom Cirlce, there are 599 telephone exchanges mostly in the rural areas where the installed capacity is not presently utilised fully. The major reason being that as per departmental policy, a new exchange in a rural area is opened based on a registered demand of only 10 connections. This is to encourage and augment communication facility in rural areas of the country. The minimum installed capacity of such exchanges is 56/88 lines, which is filled up progressively as the demand for more connections is received. Some capacity is also to be kept unutilised for technical reasons including testing and maintenance purpose and also to meet urgent unforseen demands. Efforts are always made to load these exchanges to their optimum level.

(d) The information is given in the enclosed Statement.

(e) and (f). Yes, Sir. All the villages are planned to be covered during 1996-97.

(g) No letters have been received from Members of Parliament from Haryana, in this regard.

(h) Does not arise in view of (g) above.

STATEMENT

S.No.	Name of District	No. of villages not provided with Telephone facilities
1.	Ambala (including Panchcula)	39
2.	Bhiwani	72
3.	Faridabad	145
4.	Gurgaon	358
5.	Hissar	5
6.	Jind	31
7.	Karnal	121
8.	Kaithal	159
9.	Kurukshetra	111
10.	Mahindergarh	130
11.	Panipat	69
12.	Rewari	76
13.	Rohtak	40
14.	Sirsa	3
15.	Sonepat	3
16.	Yamunanagar	300
	Total	1562

Norms to Improve Safety of Private Airlines

307. SHRI HARIN PATHAK : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have set up norms to improve safety standards of private airlines;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the details of inspections conducted by the safety audit team of Director General, Civil Aviation during the last one year and action taken in the matter where deficiencies were observed?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM) : (a) and (b) Safety norms are laid down in various regulatory documents. These are applicable to all airlines, including private airlines. The safety norms are continuously updated.

(c) During the last one year (from October 1995 till date) Directorate General of Civil Aviation carried out the safety audit of Jagson Airlines, Mesco Airlines and Air India. The deficiencies pointed out in the safety audit were brought to the notice of the operators for taking necessary remedial in-house measures.

Declaration of Sunderbans as an International Tourist Spot

308. SHRI SAMIK LAHIRI : Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Union Government propose to declare 'Sunderbans' of West Bengal as an International Tourist Spot; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRI SRIKANTA JENA) : (a) and (b) The Development of Tourist places is primarily the responsibility of the State Governments. The Department of Tourism extends financial assistance every year for the projects received from the State Governments, including West Bengal, on the basis of their merits and inter se priority. During 1988-89, Rs. 49.50 lakhs was sanctioned to the State Government of West Bengal to purchase a cruise vessel for the Sunderbans.

Tourism Industry Affected by Dengue Epidemic

309. KUMARI SUSHILA TIRIYA : Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that tourism industry was adversely affected by the out-break of Dengue epidemic;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the total loss suffered by the tourism industry due to this epidemic?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRI SRIKANTA JENA): (a) to (c) The tourist arrivals during the month of October 1996 registered an overall increase of 2.8% over the corresponding month of previous year. It is, however, difficult to estimate the exact impact of Dengue on tourist arrivals on the whole.